



Why Are You  
Afraid  
To Hold My Hand?

SHEILA DHIR



# Why Are You Afraid To Hold My Hand?

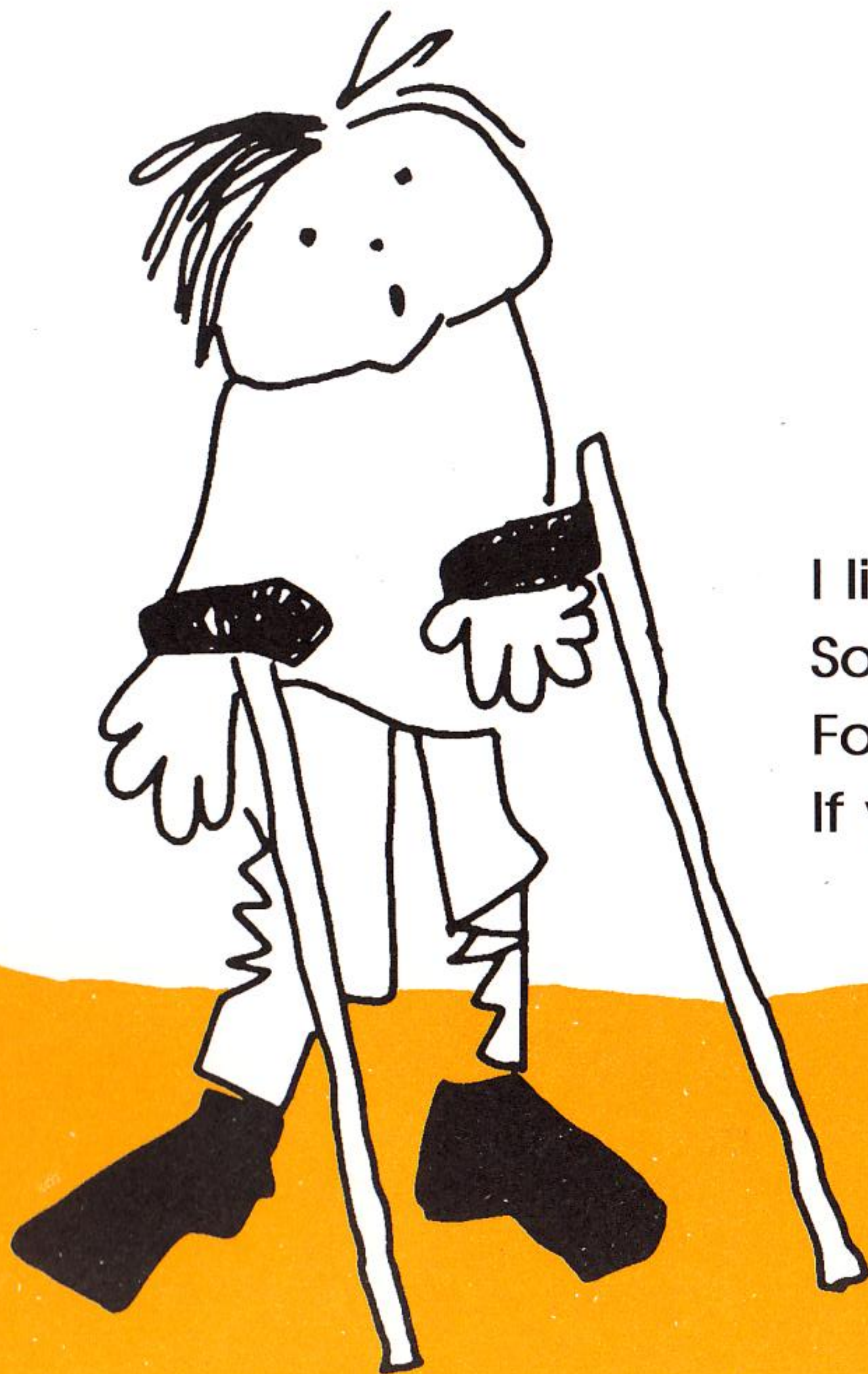
SHEILA DHIR

dedicated to Radhika and Devika who are not afraid to ask questions





# People say all sorts of things



I limp, I lisp, all this and more,  
Sometimes I feel so sad and sore.  
Folks make fun, it's nothing new,  
If you were me, what would you do?



# She drools all the time

Yes, I have a problem.  
No, it will not go away.  
Take me for who I am: a child  
Who simply wants to play.





so sad





Please don't cry  
Or feel bad.  
I'm doing fine,  
So why be sad?

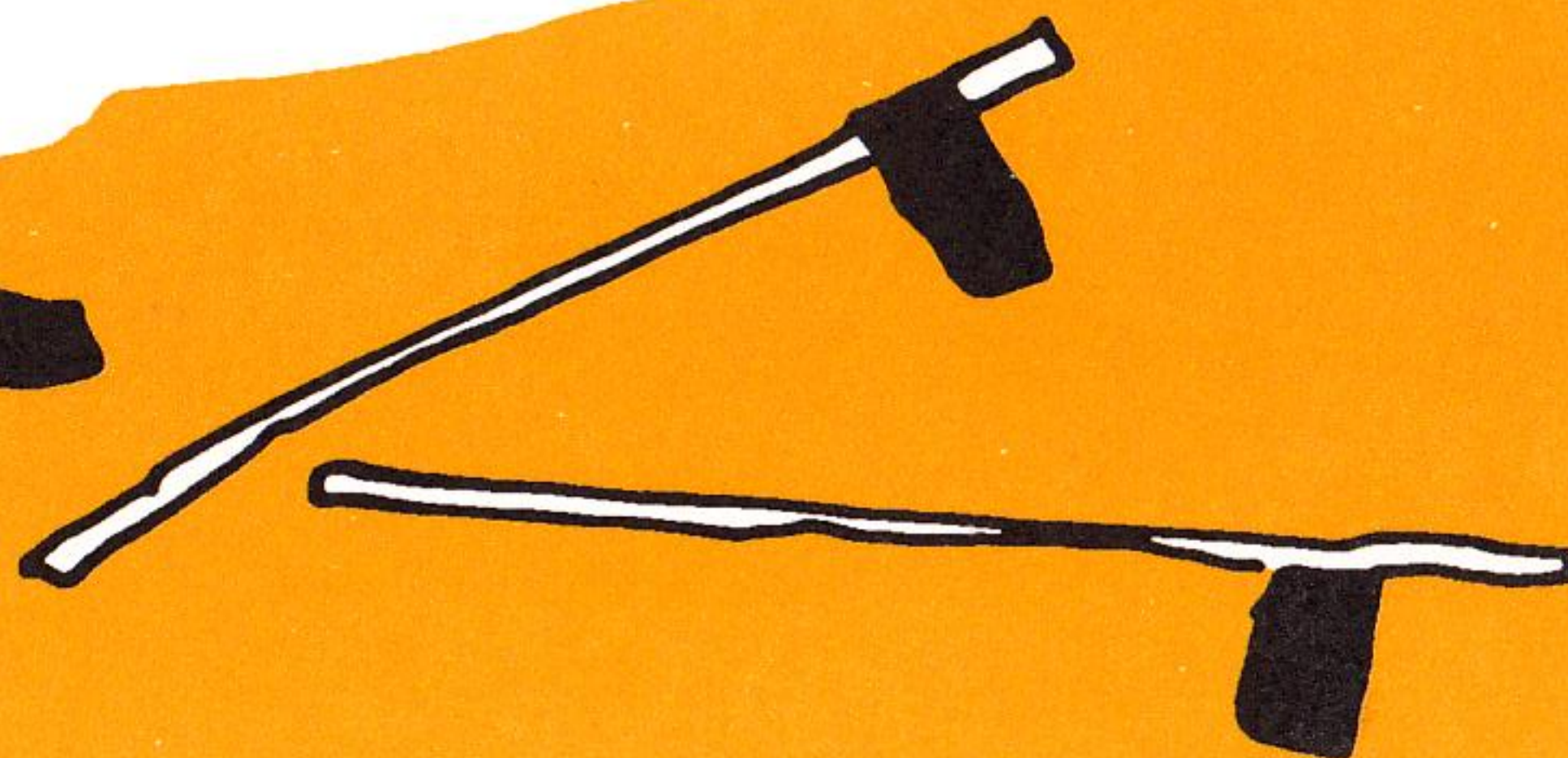






Here, let ME do it for you

Don't smother me.  
Give me space  
To live my life  
At my own pace.







# Isn't it our **D.U.T.Y.?**

I know you care.  
I know you can.  
Just be my friend,  
Accept me as I am.





You  
look  
so . . .

so different!

I'm a person, I feel shy.  
From staring eyes I want to hide.



i was only trying to help

You want to help?  
I'll tell you how.  
Let me help myself  
Always from now.







What to say? What to do?  
I don't know!

Don't be confused.  
It's simple, see.  
You be you  
And I'll be me.





# Is her mind okay?



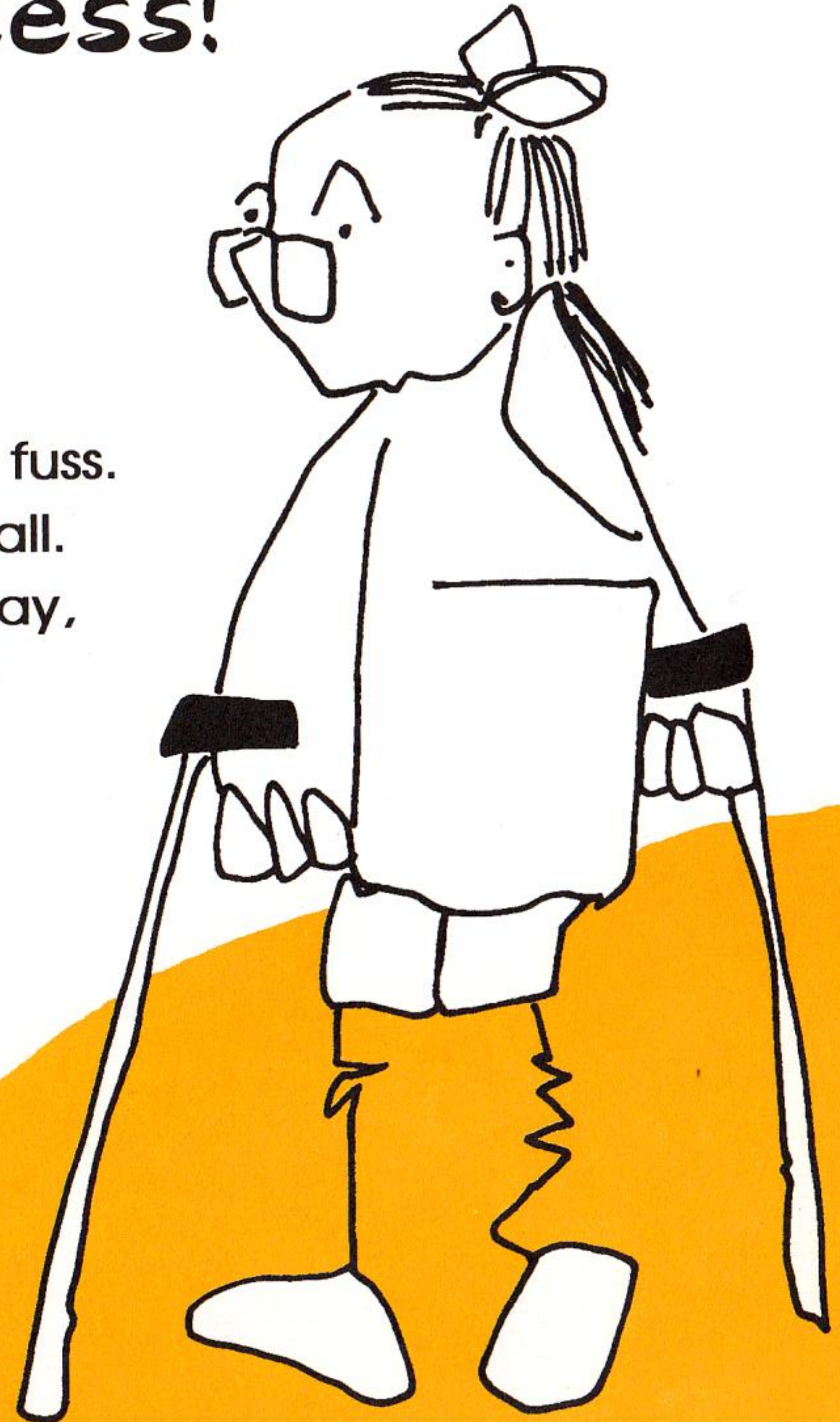
Just because  
My legs are wobbly,  
People think  
My mind is wobbly too.



A simple line drawing of a boy with spiky hair, wearing a long-sleeved shirt and pants. He is standing on a yellow, rounded shape representing a hill. At his feet are several geometric shapes: a large triangle, a cylinder, and a small cone.

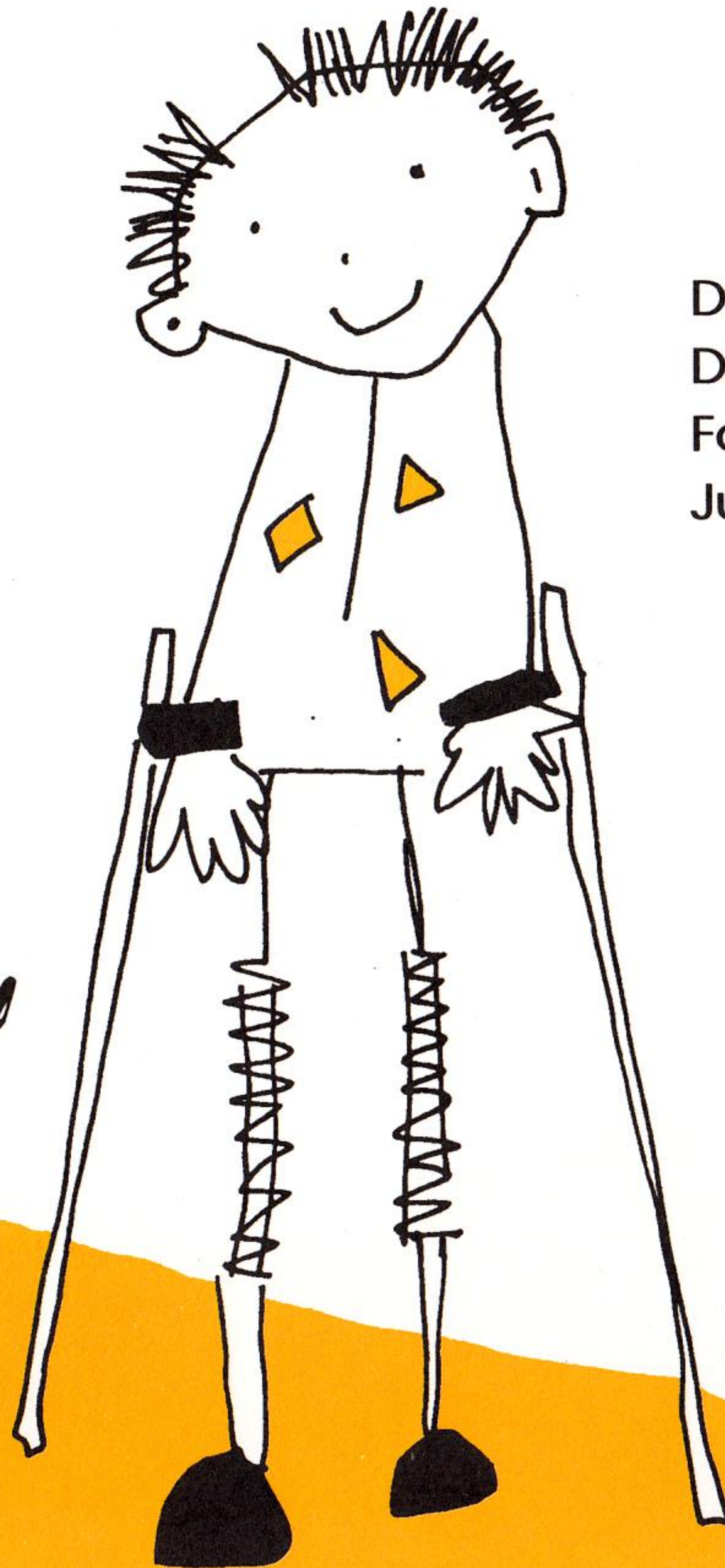
**But you're so helpless!**

I don't like it when you fuss.  
It makes me feel so small.  
Let me do it my own way,  
So what if I should fall?





I feel guilty



Don't be silly,  
Don't feel bad.  
For what you have,  
Just be glad.





# Plain MEAN

I sure mind when you are mean.  
It hurts, and so I say:  
What if this — it can, you know —  
Happened to you one day?





Why are you  
afraid?





I know I seem at odds to you,  
Even angry, but that's not true.  
Still, I cannot understand:

**Why are you  
afraid  
to hold  
my hand?**



I am grateful to the children and staff of the Spastics Society of India, Mumbai, who inspired this work, and to Manish for his assistance with illustrative creativity.

Sheila Dhir

**Why are you afraid to hold my hand? (English)**

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A must-read for everyone...  
a definite eye-opener.

— *The New Indian Express*

A little paperback tackles a big  
subject... adults and children  
alike would need a strong heart  
not to be moved by it.

— *The Straits Times*

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ENGLISH

Age 6+ / ₹ 65

*Why are you afraid to hold my hand?* is a book about attitudes.

People react in the strangest ways to children with disabilities.

Most times they simply don't know what to do. This book is a differently abled child's silent dialogue with society. The child in this book has cerebral palsy because the part of the brain that controls the muscles and movement has been damaged. Fifty per cent of people with cerebral palsy have average or above average intelligence.

The book describes reactions of people, their questions and misconceptions, their doubts and fears and preconceived notions. The child responds in verse — simply and straight from the heart.

As she/he says:

Just because

My legs are wobbly,

People think

My mind is wobbly too.

*Why are you afraid to hold my hand?* is a sensible and sensitive way of helping children understand disability and the strengths of those who are differently abled. The simplicity of the lines, both visual and verbal, will engage children and adults

